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From: Commander U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam  
To: Commander in Chief U. S. Pacific Fleet (Code 12)  
Subj: U. S. Naval Forces, Vietnam Monthly Historical Summary, March 1968; submission of  
Ref: (a) CINCPACFLT ltr FF1-1 5750 ser 1/6925 of 2 October 1967  
Encl: (1) Coastal Surveillance Force Summary  
(2) River Patrol Force Summary  
(3) Riverine Assault Force Summary  
(4) Naval Advisory Group Summary  
(5) Selected Psychological Operations  
(6) USN Statistical Summary  
(7) VNM/VNMC Statistical Summary  
(8) USN Civic Action Statistical Summary

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are submitted.

2. The data contained in enclosures (6), (7) and (8) is based on information available this date and is subject to revisions as later information is received. Any adjustments to enclosures (6), (7) and (8) will be reflected in March's Historical Supplement.

J. W. THOMPSON  
Flag Secretary

Copy to:  
COMUSMACV (Hist. Branch, SJS)  
CNO (Op-09891E)  
Director of Naval History



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COASTAL SURVEILLANCE FORCE SUMMARY (TASK FORCE 115)  
March 1968

MARKET TIME activity increased sharply during March as the heavy fighting that followed the New Year (TET) offensive subsided somewhat, thus allowing a higher utilization of waterways by indigenous junks and sampans. Unseasonably fair weather throughout the four coastal zones also contributed to the increase in routine MARKET TIME activity.

In March MARKET TIME units detected 71,005 junks and sampans; 28,489 of these were inspected and 12,982 were boarded. The boardings resulted in the detention of 552 suspicious persons. In addition, 1,331 steel-hulled craft were detected transiting MARKET TIME areas during the month.

The month's activity also included providing numerous exfiltration/infiltration patrols in support of ground operations, 250 naval gunfire support missions, and 39 hostile fire incidents.

As a result of these operations, 50 enemy structures and 21 junks were destroyed. In addition, 100 Viet Cong were killed (five probable).

On the 3rd of March USCGC POINT CAUTION joined the SEVENTH Fleet's USS HOLLISTER (DD 788) and USS CANNONADE (IFS 1) to provide harassment and interdiction fire on an area approximately 55 miles northeast of Danang where the Army's 1st Air Cavalry had reported the concentration of a North Vietnamese Army battalion. A later sweep of the area by ground units revealed 84 enemy troops had been killed by the ships' firing.

On the 6th of March the Coast Guard's POINT LEAGUE was providing

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security and logistic support for a beach survey approximately 50 miles northeast of Pung Tau when the participating Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) received hostile fire from the beach. The cutter returned and suppressed the fire, killed two Viet Cong, then evacuated the UDT personnel.

On the morning of 10 March the ammunition ramp at Qua Viet came under an enemy artillery attack. The incoming artillery rounds detonated the ammunition on the ramp and a large fire ensued. The 1st Marine Amphibious Battalion requested assistance in coordinating the afloat effort from the Coast Guard's POINT ARDEN. PCF 81 also arrived on scene and assisted in fighting the fire. Three of POINT ARDEN's crewmembers were wounded and the cutter sustained shrapnel and blast damage as a result of a large explosion on the ramp. The ammunition fire was subsequently brought under control with no additional casualties.

On 23 March in response to a request from sector authorities, PCF 103 took an area 33 miles south of Saigon under fire with her 81-mm mortar. A subsequent report from sector intelligence personnel indicated that three Viet Cong were killed and four were wounded as a result of the Swift boat's firing. One structure was also destroyed during the mission.

As of 25 March the Vietnamese Navy (VNN) had assumed full responsibility for the manning of two additional MARKET TIME patrol areas; one in the Second Coastal Zone and the other in the Third Coastal Zone. This

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assumption of responsibility gave VNN the sole responsibility for manning a total of six MARKET TIME patrol areas.

Salvage and exploitation of the infiltration trawlers destroyed during the early morning hours of 1 March continued during the month with much valuable information concerning the construction of the vessels and the composition of their cargo being gained.

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RIVER PATROL FORCE SUMMARY

March 1968

The Communist insurgents continued to employ rockets and automatic-weapons in their attacks against PBR patrols with increased effectiveness during the month, however, the river patrol boats were not deterred from their role of interdiction of the enemy. In one two-day period in five separate incidents three PBR sailors were killed and twenty were wounded when their patrols were attacked by the Viet Cong employing RPG-2 and RPG-7 rockets. GAME WARDEN units actively pursued the Viet Cong at every opportunity to exert a mounting pressure on the enemy. On three separate encounters with the Viet Cong, SEALs killed 28 of the enemy. In I CTZ PBRs continued to operate in support of CTF CLEARWATER in providing river security for logistical craft, operating on the Perfume River, supporting Hubs.

On the opening day of the month a PBR patrol captured three Viet Cong and their sampans on the lower Sasseo river in the vicinity of May Island. Later that day in the same area a patrol came under a heavy 3-40 attack that seriously wounded three crewmen and inflicted minor wounds on three others. On the same day, two PBRs patrolling on the Mekong river, 7 miles northeast of Vinh Long, engaged evading sampans and killed three Viet Cong. Two sampans were also destroyed in the action. On the 3rd, "Seawolves" flew an airstrike against Viet Cong positions 10 miles north-northwest of Sa Dec. The rocket and machine-gun fire from the Navy armed

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helicopters killed five Viet Cong, destroyed 15 sampans and damaged nine others. Two days later the "Seawolves" put in another airstrike along a tree line near a destroyed outpost flying a Viet Cong flag. The mission, flown just north of Tra On, accounted for six Viet Cong killed and five wounded, plus one structure and 6,000 kilos of rice destroyed. On 6 March a PBR patrol operating five miles east of Vinh Long came under heavy rocket and automatic-weapons fire. One rocket (believed to be an RPG-7) impacted on the forward 50-caliber mount blowing the gunner over the side. The seriously wounded crewman was recovered from the water while the boats continued to return the enemy fire. Two additional crewmen were wounded and the boat sustained extensive damage to the hull and gunmount. On the 7th SEALs engaged a company-size unit of Viet Cong, three miles north of Phu Vinh off the Co Chien River. Six Viet Cong were killed and 20 were wounded in the operation. Also captured were several weapons and ammunition. Early on the morning of the 14th, SEALs operating 12 miles east of My Tho made contact with enemy forces. In the ensuing fire fight 16 Viet Cong were killed. Four SEALs received minor wounds from a Viet Cong grenade. The same evening, SEALs on patrol nine miles west of Can Tho killed six Viet Cong and captured one, in addition to numerous items of ammunition, communications equipment, medicine, documents and other miscellaneous equipment. On 7 March a PBR on routine patrol, one-half mile west of Ben Tre, was hit by a B-40 rocket. The

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explosion wounded four of the sailors—one died of wounds later. On the 13th a PBR patrol made an approach on a sampan, near May Island on the Bassac, to conduct a routine inspection. As the inspecting PBR closed the sampan, an occupant jumped up and opened fire on the boat with an AK-47 automatic weapon. The PBRs opened fire on the boat killing the three occupants. Simultaneously the boats came under heavy fire from the mainland. In the fierce engagement that ensued, three PBR sailors were wounded. Enemy casualties on the shore were unknown. A PBR returning from patrol on 20 March was lifted two to three feet out of the Long Tau river, two miles from Nha Be, by a possible water mine detonation. There were no personnel casualties, however, the boat sustained a split keel. The same day PBRs on an upper Ham Luong patrol exchanged fire with an evading 28-foot sampan, setting it ablaze and killing five Viet Cong. Five additional Viet Cong were wounded and five suspects were detained. In a two-day period—23 to 25 March—in three separate incidents on the Bassac, Mekong and Co Chien Rivers and two incidents in the RSSZ, PBR patrols came under enemy rocket attacks. Three PBR sailors were killed and 20 wounded as a result of the ambushes. One U. S. Marine was also wounded in the action that occurred in the RSSZ. In the attack on the Mekong one PBR was sunk but later salvaged. Early on the morning of 29 March SEALs acting on intelligence provided by a recent Hoi Chunh seized a significant arms and weapons cache. The rallier led the SEALs to the

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site located about 10 miles south of Ben Tre that also contained a weapons repair factory. Included in the arms captured were two 75-mm recoilless rifles, five 120-mm home-made rockets of high quality, three Schmeisser machine guns, grenade and rocket molds, and numerous mines and grenades including CS grenades. Four Viet Cong were killed and the factory destroyed during the operation.

Later the same morning, Operation QUICK-KILL ( a quick reaction force) was activated immediately after a PBR patrol had received enemy fire from May Island on the Bassac. An hour and 15 minutes later, SEALs were landed and, with fire support from the "Seawolves", killed 27 Viet Cong in the three-hour operation.

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RIVERINE ASSAULT FORCE SUMMARY  
March 1968

The Mobile Riverine Base (MRB) at Dong Tam became a prime Viet Cong target receiving its first direct attack during the month of March when three major support ships were hit by recoilless-rifle and rocket fire in three separate incidents. On 3 March COMUSMACV directed that elements of one River Assault Division be deployed to I Corps for a period of about 30 days to provide heavy escort services for waterborne logistic convoys on the Cuu Viet and Perfume Rivers. The riverine unit, consisting of one CCB, three monitors and 10 ATCs, arrived in I Corps on 9 March and commenced operations under the opcon of CTF CLEARWATER on the next day. The sinking of five ASFBs (two by enemy fire) in less than 30 days prompted COMNAVFLOT CMB to temporarily curtail ASFB operations to the minimum required for combat operations.

On 1-2 March CORONAID XI operations in the Can Tho city area of Phong Dinh province continued at an accelerated pace with RADs 92 and 111 riverine units providing mobile support to elements of the 2nd Brigade of the U. S. NINTH Infantry Division. Thirty-two Viet Cong were killed in the two-day operation, while friendly casualties consisted of five soldiers killed and 39 wounded. Early on the morning of 1 March, an ASFB (A-112-6) and a monitor (M-112-1) were hit by several B-40 rocket rounds on the Can Tho river, six miles southwest of Can Tho. When the ambush occurred, the riverine craft were conducting security patrols in the vicinity of the

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salvage operations for an ASPB (A-112-4) which had sunk on 27 February. The monitor escaped unscathed; however, the ASPB sustained a direct B-40 hit on the engine cover and was towed back to the MRB. One crew member was killed and another wounded in the attack. The sunken ASPB was subsequently recovered and towed to Can Tho on 4 March. On 2 March another ASPB (A-91-1) was swamped by the wake of two passing ASPBs, and sank in less than one minute at the junction of the Can Tho River and Ba Long Stream, four miles southwest of Can Tho. One Navyman, trapped in the berthing compartment, drowned as a result of the rapid sinking. Hampered by severe tidal currents, the salvage operations were not completed until 6 March, when the recovered ASPB was returned to Can Tho. During the early morning hours of 5 March, USS SEDGWICK COUNTY (LST 1123), the MRB resupply LST laden with aviation fuel and ammunition, received a direct hit from an enemy recoilless-rifle round; however, the damage was minimal and there were no personnel casualties. Operation CORONADO XII (7-9 March), conducted north of the Ca Gao Stream in Cho Gao district of Ding Tuong province, resulted in heavy fighting and an attack on the fire support base supporting the operation. On 9 March, the FSPB, located five miles east of My Tho, received a heavy barrage of mortar fire which caused a raging fire on one of the barge ammunition storage areas. The two badly damaged Army barges were destroyed by Navy EOD personnel. One fire-fighting sailor was killed, one soldier was missing and 14 other soldiers were wounded in

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the inferno. Enemy losses during this three-day CORONADO operation amounted to 44 Viet Cong killed, while friendly casualties were reported as 11 killed and 100 wounded. On 10-11 March, the MRF shifted its area of operations into the Cam Son/Ban Long Secret Zones, killing 31 enemy guerrillas and capturing 10 prisoners in a series of sporadic encounters. There was one soldier killed, two sailors and four infantrymen wounded. On 14 March, an ASPB (A-92-7) sank on the San Giang river seven miles west of Dong Tam after receiving a direct rocket hit in the stern below the waterline. Salvage operations proved infeasible; therefore, the stricken ASPB was stripped of removable weapons and equipment and destroyed in-place by MRF EOD personnel. That same day in I Corps, an ATC (T-112-7) sweeping the Cua Viet River two miles northeast of Dong Ha in Quang Tri province was flipped over by the explosion of a large (estimated 900 lb.) water mine. Six crew members were killed, one was seriously wounded and the boat was deemed a total loss due to extensive hull damage. On 18 March, riverine craft of RAD 92 transiting the Ba Rai Stream three miles southwest of Cai Lay in Dinh Tuong province were ambushed by rockets, recoilless-rifle and automatic-weapon fire, killing the division commander of TU 117.1.2 and wounding 17 sailors. Enemy casualties were undetermined. On 21 March USS BERNHAWK (APB 36), anchored with the MRF one mile southwest of Dong Tam, sustained two 75-mm recoilless-rifle hits from the south bank of the My Tho River. The ship suffered minor damage and there were no personnel casualties.

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**NAVAL ADVISORY GROUP SUMMARY**  
**March 1968**

During the month the Fleet Command had a daily average of 22.1 ships available and a daily average of 21.3 ships employed, and conducted 62 gunfire support missions. At the same time the Coastal Force employed a daily average of 159.4 junks of a daily average of 178.5 available, and the River Assault Groups employed a daily average of 144.5 of 154.6 craft available. The VNM's six infantry and one artillery battalions were committed to operations 98 percent of the time and experienced light contact with the enemy. Task Force A, composed of the 1st, 4th and 5th Infantry Battalions and Battery C of the VNMC Artillery Battalion, continued clearing operations in and around Hue until 27 March. The Task Force then returned to Saigon to relieve Task Force B (the 2nd, 3rd and 6th Infantry Battalions) in the Saigon TAOR. The 1st Battalion was assigned to the ready reaction force at the base camp at Thu Duc and the 6th Battalion remained with the 4th and 5th Battalions in the Saigon TAOR. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions and Battery B were assigned to IV CTZ on 26 March under the operational control of the ARVN 21st Infantry Division.

The VNN this month assumed two additional MARKET TIME areas for patrolling the Vietnamese coast. The increasing scope of responsibility is indicative of the growth of the VNN and the sophistication of the

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personnel training and continued maintenance of its assets. Fleet Command ships in the Second Naval Zone demonstrated the professionalism and fighting spirit that is rapidly becoming the hallmark of the VNN as they participated in the capture of the North Vietnamese trawler at Hon Heo peninsula on 1 March. Coastal Group 25 junks also illustrated their capability during recovery operations. Junks and landing parties were engaged in securing the area and extracting valuable documents, equipment and ammunition which the trawler had attempted to infiltrate. RAG 33 Commandment 6005 was ambushed and sunk in 15 feet of water in the My Tho river just south of the city of My Tho. Answering a call for gunfire support from the ARVN SEVENTH Division headquarters on 6 March, the commandment saturated the area and received return fire. Two VNN sailors were killed and five were wounded as B-40 rockets tore into the 81-mm mortar storage, breaking the ship; it sank in five minutes. RAG 21 craft and LSSL 228 responded immediately and all enemy fire was suppressed in half an hour. Air strikes were called in support of the ARVN SEVENTH Division as a sweep was conducted in the ambush area. Enemy casualties were unknown. RAG 21/33 units provided the security as VNN LCU 537 commenced salvage operations the next day. On the night of 4-5 March, the southern Mekong Delta city of Ca Mau was subjected to a massive Viet Cong attack. Mortar rounds were walked into an area toward the POL yards. Thatched and wooden structures near the house of the Province Chief were consumed by fire, and a chain reaction was

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set off when a 2.75-inch rocket storage area was hit by an incoming mortar round. While the RAG 25/29 detachment rallied to the city's defense, a RAG 25/29 river team hastened also to provide security from its beaching site outside the city. The Viet Cong attacked this convoy, flooding one LCM and inactivating the 40-mm mount on a meritor, killing two VNN sailors and wounding 10 others; one sailor was declared missing in action. Upon cessation of the city attack, RAG 25/29 accounted for 40 Viet Cong killed while losing three of their own; another sailor was missing and five were wounded. Coastal Group 12 units conducted two separate operations on 23 March in the Phu Vang sub-sector, the land mass across the Thanh Lam Bay east of Hue. In one, Coastal Group junks provided troop lift and blocking support to two Popular Force platoons and sub-sector police units as a sweep of the area yielded four Viet Cong killed, seven captured, 18 Viet Cong suspects detained and numerous weapons seized. Meanwhile, six Coastal Group 12 units, one Coastal Group 12 ambush team, TF 116 PBRs and approximately 170 RF/FF troops operating just to the north, evacuated over 400 Catholic civilians from the Phu Vang sub-sector across the bay to the mainland. During the 10-hour operation, three NVA and eight Viet Cong suspects were captured, one Viet Cong was killed and one was wounded.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CIVIC ACTION OPERATIONS  
March 1968

Payops efforts continued to be directed to the exploitation of the Viet Cong T&T Offensive via increased loudspeaker broadcasts and leaflet distribution. One fertile field for prosecution was the recruitment of juvenile males and females by the Viet Cong. Capitalizing on this action, broadcasts were directed to parents in contested, secure and insecure areas stating that although the Viet Cong promised not to use their sons and daughters in the front lines they failed to honor their pledge. The capabilities of naval units to engage in surface broadcasts increased substantially as new equipment continued to be provided to the Task Force Commanders. The effectiveness of the surface broadcasts continued to be demonstrated by the increased attacks on the broadcasting vehicles by the Viet Cong. During the month TF 115, TF 116 and TF 117 each had boats receiving enemy fire during psychological operation missions. During one incident on 23 March, a PBR patrol conducting a psychological operations speaker mission on the Bassac River had three crewmen wounded when it came under withering rocket and automatic-weapons fire. On 27 March a Viet Cong rallied to a PBR patrol on the Nam Luong after hearing a river patrol boat psychological operations broadcast the night before. The Hoi Chanh provided information that prompted a SEAL operation on 29 March resulting in a seizure of a significant weapons cache and destruction of a Viet Cong weapons repair factory ten miles southeast of Ben Tre. The Hoi Chanh stated his reason for rallying was lack of food and failure of the Viet Cong to allow him to visit his parents.

Civic Action activity increased as units gradually returned to a

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pre-TET posture of readiness allowing greater opportunities to perform these functions. Freedom of movement throughout the countryside continued to be restricted however, by the threat of enemy activity and reprisals by the Viet Cong against the villagers. To assist the refugees in I CTZ and II CTZ the Vietnamese Navy hospital ships, HQ 400 and HQ 401, departed Saigon on 15 March for Hue, Nha Trang and Phan Thiet. Voluntary contributions were received from naval forces throughout Vietnam to assist in the TET Aggression Relief Project (TARP). In one instance, personnel of MAH/CSG/TG 115.3, located at Vung Tau, contributed 160 dollars to the Long Xuyen hospital to enable a student nurse to complete her nursing education. The student nurse was one of several who was unable to continue training as a result of family losses incurred during the TET offensive.

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USN STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
March 1968

	<u>MARKET TIME</u>	<u>GAME WARDEN</u>	<u>Mobile Riverine Force</u>
Detections	72,336	83,503	*
Inspections	29,477	22,086	*
Boardings	13,026	41,649	*
Craft detained	*	13	*
Persons detained	552	771	201
Viet Cong suspects	2	78	*
Hostile Fire incidents	39	157	*
Enemy casualties:			
a. Killed	100 (5 prob.)	169	146
b. Wounded	9	58	1
c. Captured	6	10	26
USN casualties:			
a. Killed	0	4	9
b. Wounded	4	64	23
c. Captured	0	0	0
d. Missing	0	0	0
Enemy material losses:			
a. Destroyed:			
(1) Junks or sampans	21	175	4
(2) Structures	50	173	1,114
b. Captured:			
(1) Junks or sampans	2	14	0
(2) Weapons	*	28	1,101**
(3) Ammunition (rounds)	*	****	1,520***
(4) Rice (tons)	*	3	0
c. Damaged:			
(1) Junks or sampans	11	223	*
(2) Structures	118	176	*
USN material losses:			
a. Destroyed:			
(1) Surface craft	0	0	2
(2) Helicopters	*	0	0
b. Damaged:			
(1) Surface craft	3	30	9
(2) Helicopters	*	22	*
SAR missions	*	0	0

**Remarks:**

- \* Information not applicable or not available this date.
- \*\* Includes 1,000 mines and 62 grenades.
- \*\*\* Includes 137 mortar, rocket and recoilless-rifle rounds.
- \*\*\*\* 28 claymore mines, 30 small water mines, 8 75-mm recoilless-rifle rounds, 19 C/S grenades, 25 CHICOM fragmentation grenades, 18 boxes of Viet Cong produced fragmentation grenades and 8 cases small-arms ammunition.

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VNM/VNMC STATISTICAL SUMMARY  
March 1968

VIETNAMESE NAVY:

	<u>Searched</u>		<u>Detained</u>	
	<u>Junks</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Junks</u>	<u>People</u>
COASTAL FORCE				
I NZ	11,565	36,304	4	146
II NZ	9,787	31,310	3	183
III NZ	6,878	25,929	0	13
IV NZ	3,176	9,311	2	0
Sub-totals	31,406	102,854	9	342
FLEET COMMAND				
PATROL SHIPS	1,089	5,156	0	40
RIVERINE AREA				
CRAFT	3,258	8,944	2	0
<u>TOTALS</u>	35,753	116,954	11	382

VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS:

VC/NVA: 55 KIA 2 CAPTURED 289 SUSPECTS DETAINED  
VNMC: 26 KIA 83 WIA

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**USM CIVIC ACTION STATISTICAL SUMMARY**  
**March 1968\***

1. Total man days naval personnel engaged in Civic Action activities: 668.

2. Cost of supplies contributed from military resources for Civic Action projects: 514,289\$VN.

3. Voluntary contributions: 55,900\$VN.

4. Percent of U. S. military Civic Action projects conducted jointly with:

	<u>Percent</u>
Other FVMAF	11
FVMAF	17
U. S. civilian voluntary agencies	17
Average percent of self-help by VN civilians	14

5. Programs conducted:

	<u>Man Days</u>	<u>Expenditures (\$VN)</u>
Economic Development	15.5	123,200
Education	40	105,739
Social Welfare	288.5	305,930
Transportation	13	0
Refugee Assistance	184	289,753

6. Institutes assisted:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Expenditures (\$VN)</u>
Schools	5	3,000
Hospitals/dispensaries	17	11,800
Orphanages	8	37,100
Others	4	11,800

**Remarks:**

\* Reporting period is 26 February - 25 March.

Enclosure (8)